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AUTHOR Haslebo, Gitte; And Others
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ABSTRACT

EIT, or the European Institute for Transnational Studies in Group and Organisational Development, was founded in 1965 as a forum for international trainers in Europe. At present EIT has about 48 members, among which 7 are in the Scandinavian countries. EIT's most important tasks lie within the field of applied social psychology. After many years of consideration, EIT took the initiative to start the first systematic trainer education in Europe in 1970. The program, called Development of International Trainers (DIT), began at a local level and continues at an international one. The purpose of this article is to give a description of the Scandinavian part of EIT's trainer education in which the authors were the Danish participants. (Author)

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A different kind of postgraduate education.
- EIT's educational program for international trainers.

What is EIT?

As a parallel to NTL (National Training Laboratories) in the U.S., EIT was founded in 1965 as a forum for international trainers in Europe.

EIT is shortened for: European Institute for Transnational Studies in Group and Organisational Development. At present EIT has about 48 members, among which seven are in the Scandinavian countries.

EIT's most important tasks lie within the field of applied social psychology. After many years of consideration, finally in 1970 EIT took the initiative to start the first systematic trainer education in Europe. The education, which is called Development of International Trainers (DIT), began at a local level, and continues at an international one. In 1970 one group started in Holland-Belgium, and one in Scandinavia.

The purpose of this article is to give a description of the Scandinavian part of EIT's trainer education, in which the authors were the Danish participants.

How is the trainer education?

The purpose of the trainer education is to make the participants capable of working with sensitivity training and the laboratory method in national and international settings.

As a first introduction we will give a short description of the phases of the education:

Before being accepted as a member of the DIT group, the members have participated in one or more laboratorirs led by EIT members, and besides they have acquired some practical experiences working in the field of applied social psychology. Furthermore, they have a Master's degree in one of the behavioral sciences. Phase 2, which include eight seminars of 3 days each, offer possibilities of obtaining practical and theoretical experiences with groups, organizations, the trainer role, planning of change, the laboratory method, and psychopathology.

Phase 3 implies participation in an international laboratory of 10-14 days' length.

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Phase 4 contains at least two experiences as a co-trainer with EIT members.

The Scandinavian group of 1970 had 12 members who were together during phase 2, and who individually have gone or are going through phases 1, 3 and 4.

As trainers for the group at the eight seminars during phase 2 we had Gunnar Hjelholt and Trygve Johnstad, besides the psychiatrist Ron Markillie from Leeds University at the seminar about psychopathology.

The expenses for the seminars were paid by the participants, and amounted to 2oo Danish Crowns for each seminar plus expenses to travel and board and lodgings. The 2oo kr. covered travel and living expenses for the trainer (who worked free) plus administration. Almost all participants have had all or most of their expenses covered by their institution.

What were the 8 seminars about?

1. At the first seminar we made a rough plan of the topics for the following seminars. How we came to work with these topics will be explained later.

   The planning phase comprised getting to know each other, and secondly making an investigation of individual learning needs which could lead to a beginning formulation of the group's goals. Furthermore, each member was offered individual counseling regarding working out a personal reading list. An important aspect of this first seminar was working with how we saw oruselves as trainers

2. The second seminar was a practical task for the group. The task consisted of planning, carrying out and evaluating a follow-up day for participants from an earlier sentitivity training course. In the evaluation of our work as a staff there were considerations about how our implicit learning models, the relations between participants and staff, and the problems within the staff influenced the events during the follow-up day.

3. At the third seminar we were occupied with different theories about the conscious and unconscious levels in the group. Furthermore we discussed various forms of psychopathology in structured and unstructured groups. At last we focussed on different ethical problems

4 + 5. The fourth and fifth seminars were combined to a whole week during which we worked with the trainer role, trainer styles and trainer

interventions using the method of self-confrontation with videotape. On the basis of a diagnosis of the present problems of the group, we took terms working as a trainer in the situations we felt most difficult to handle as trainers. Each time 2o minutes were recorded on the videotape, playe back, and discussed for about two hours during which we tried to diagnosticate the group processes, give the trainers feedback and come up with suggestions for alternative trainer interventions. At that time the problems we had in the group were: decision-making processes, authority, critical evaluation of each others, communication, passitivity, sub-groupings, swarm-feelings and sex, lack of spontaneity and flight, and the question of how to become a good trainer.

6. At the sixth seminar we worked with nonverbal communication, and how the use of nonverbal exercises can be used to offer possibilities for learning. We planned and carried out nonverbal actitivies which could be used to diagnosticate and work on the conflicts which existed in our group at that time. We tried to make a survey of the various types of nonverbal techniques according to their purposes, degree of influence, and applicability.

7. At the seventh seminar we started working with organizational psychology. We were concerned with questions about the birth, life and death of organizations, sources of security and insecurity in organizations, different models of change regarding organizational development, and the consultant's role. In contradiction to the earlier seminars we spent most of the time discussing these matters at a theoretical level.

8. At the last seminar we gave each other personal feedback on the basis of various classifications of trainer roles, personality models, etc. Besides we worked with laboratory training in a broader perspective such as: the relations between training, society, and politics. At last we undertook an evaluation of the whole DIT education, and as a continuation of this, we founded an organization: The Scandinavian Trainer Forum (STF), with the purpose of giving possibilities for exchanging information and experiences in the years to come. So far STF has planned to have its first yearly meeting just before Christmas in 1971 in Oslo.

How was the DIT education?

The form of education is distinguished from a traditional university education and postgraduate programs with regard to some decisive aspects to be described below:

a. Source of information.
The "raw material" in our education came to a high degree from the group itself, both as to experiences the participants had acquired from their work within applied social psychology before the DIT group started, and between the seminars, and as to the experiences the group was confronted with in its own development. The data we worked with were in this way created by ourselves.

b. The setting for learning.
This also meant that each situation the group was in offered possibilities for learning something of some kind. In this way the difficulties we went through in the group were regarded as natural, as something one could learn from. Experiences from the work situation of the participants were also used when relevant, so that the group to some degree also functioned as a group for mutual support.

c. Problem solving methods.
One of the significant characteristics of the education is the inductive learning model it primarily is based on. This model implies that the group itself defines the problems, works out hypotheses and ways of testing them, and evaluates the outcomes. It was more important for us to learn to use different methods like process analysis and feedback, than to hear about other people's experiences.

d. Feelings and values were considered as facts of importance to the the group's work and development. In this connection learning was seen not as an acquisition of knowledge, but as a development of the whole person, which also implies an integration of a whole set of attitudes, values and emotional reactions. For instance, regarding the trainer role it is important to have some insight into the influence of one's own needs, attitudes and values on one's whole behavior in the trainer role.

e. Criteria for valid and profitable learning.
It was characteristic that each individual had a high degree of influence on his own learning situation, which also implied that

each person worked out criteria for himself, on the basis of which he could undertake an evaluation of the degree to which he had reached the goals he and the others worked out in the beginning and along the way. In this way it was not the trainers who evaluated whether one can become a trainer, but the individual and the group who give feedback on the strong and weak areas of the participants. What we accomplished in the group was mainly our own creation, and what we did not obtain was up to our own responsibility.

How does one become a participant in the DIT education?

The participants in the DIT group 1970 (7 were from Sweden, 2 from Finland, and 3 from Denmark) had sent applications to a selection committee consisting of Gunnar Hjelholt, Trygve Johnstad and Leopold Vansina at the end of 1969. The next DIT group is planned to start sometime during spring 1971. The deadline for application is March 1st, 1971. Trainers for the group are: Gori Ehrenskjöld, Trygve Johnstad and Gunnar Hjelholt. Further information can be obtained by contacting one of the trainers or the writers.

Gitte Haslebo Peter Holbøll Bent Schønfeldt